

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

Vol. 3, No. 83 Greensburg, Indiana July 1980

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Catharine Bradley, Rohnert Park,
CA

Mrs. W. L. (Suzann) McCoy,
Hodgenville, KY

Carol V. Smith

Carson H. Dreyer

Mrs. Carson H. Dreyer

Ernest R. Haston

Clarence H. Schulte

Ed McCormack, Westport, IN

Margaret Donnell Egan,

Indianapolis, IN

Mrs. Henry Hicks, San Antonio, TX

Ellen Wallace, Collinsville, IL

Arthur Rueff

C. P. Cunningham

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OCCASION: Summer Meeting (Mini-Tour, about 15 miles)

DATE: Sunday, July 13, 1980
1:45 PM meet on West side of Courthouse, Greensburg. 2:00 PM START YOUR ENGINES, south on Broadway, left on Harris City Rd.

PLACE: First stop, Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church. Further instructions will be given there.

PROGRAM: Things to be noted on trip. Upon leaving the city is the former site of a toll gate, exact spot unknown. Turner's Quarry with remains of footbridge on left just before turn in road. Turn left at T, follow around across new bridge on Sandcreek, at right on top of hill is Mt. Pleasant Cemetery. Dale Myers will be our tour conductor and dispenser of history of this region and Harris City. This will be a historically interesting tour through a real pretty part of the County, don't forget it.

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MEMBERSHIP - Open to everyone having an interest in history and his or her heritage. Annual dues are \$2.00 ea., payable in advance. Please direct all matters of membership to the Recording Secy.

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LAST MEETING - About 70 members of the Historical Society met at the Baptist Church April 20 for the Spring get together of the organization. Anna Paul Lowe, as the program speaker, gave a fine history of the local Carnegie Library. This being the 75th year of the existence of the library, it was a very appropriate program. Mrs. Lowe not only gave many interesting facts, she also included a number of fine slides. After a business meeting of short duration, the meeting adjourned to the library for a conducted tour of the properties by the library staff. The tour was completed with the serving of refreshments, a very nice thought, and appreciated by all. An informative afternoon. The library staff and board hope you will come again - often.

* * *

MUSEUM HELPERS for April & May

Lee Lauderdale	Florence Palmer
Milicent Huber	Jim Gaynor
Howard Aldridge	Ione Braden
Dorothy Doles	Nancy Gilliland
Mary Burkert	Lucille Gaynor
Lois Hamer	Martha Neimeyer
Phyllis Gaynor	Vivian Batterton
Jo Anne Martin	Ruth Oliger
Marion Stout	Roberta Alyea
Juanita Beall	Margaret Oljace
Pat Smith	

All of the 4th grade students from Greensburg, St. Mary's and North Decatur were contacted through the museum during April and (sont'd.)

MUSEUM (cont'd.) May by the afore-mentioned people. Quite an accomplishment. THANKS FOLKS!

The MUSEUM, which is located above the Koffee Kup Restaurant, will be open two days per week until the end of September -

Friday 1:00 to 4:00 PM

Saturday 1:00 to 4:00 PM

You must see the fine displays.

Recent Museum Donors

Bill Robbins	Pamela Moss
Adaline Loper	Iva Kitchen
Lillian Knox	Lee Lauderdale
Alpha Thackery	Mrs. Perry Swegman
Florine Tillson	Health Dept.
Roberta Alyea	

* * *

The information of Orliff McCormack about Greensburg and Decatur County was taken from three different tapes that he sent to us.

Mr. & Mrs. Ed (Naomi) McCormack

Orliff McCormack (cousin of Ed McCormack) was born in 1890 in Decatur County. In 1901 he moved with his parents to Cincinnati, O.

Now at the age of 90 years, he recalls a number of interesting things about Greensburg and Decatur Co. He remembers when -

Mill Street was the last street in Greensburg on the West, and had only three houses on it. A family by the name of McLaughlin lived on it. There was practically nothing past First St. to the Water Works except a carriage factory. It was just a big field, called Graham's Field, which was a good place to fly a kite. Once they had a circus there - there wasn't enough money to pay them; they got mad and set some of the tents on fire and threatened to turn some of the animals loose, and there was some shooting.

North Carver St. stopped at Michigan Pike. Only four houses on

Carver, and I lived in one of them.

From Mill St. we would turn left into Michigan Pike, to go to Logan's. They had a gate, which may have been a forerunner to the electric garage door opener that you open from the car. They had a heavy rod bent in such a way that when you run over it with the buggy and horse, it opened the gate; and then when you would run over another rod, the gate would close. I remember there was a barn built close by, built by my uncles, Marsh and Oliver McCormack and my father, John McCormack. I would go with them and would wait for a buggy to go with them and would wait for a buggy to go over the rods, so I could see the gate open.

My wife Trudie's father had a blacksmith shop on West Main St. next to Emmert's. I remember when I was going with Trudie, I would come to Greensburg from Cincinnati on the train or inter-urban. A round trip cost \$1.00 and I could rent a rig for all day for \$1.25. I would give the boy a dime and he would put a ribbon on the buggy whip, and decorate the horse. The inter-urban didn't get into town until 10 P.M. I would stay at the DeArmond Hotel for 50¢. I had a rope in the dresser drawer. In case of fire, I was to crawl out the window and slide down the rope.

In those days, there wasn't the crime problem that there is now. Greensburg didn't have a policeman. They did have a sheriff - Jeff Davis. They had a night watchman. In case of fire, they had a steam engine - a hose wagon and a ladder wagon. Had no fire alarm. Each church had a way to clang the bell, and there was a bell in the court house. If the fire was in the first ward, they would hit the bell one tap; and if in the second - two taps.

(cont'd. pg. 3)

McCORMACK (cont'd.) There was an old foundry where the library is now. They tore it down and put up the library. I was very young and I remember my brother took me to see the building. It was the first building in Greensburg to have an inside toilet. It was a big box on the wall and had a chain connected to it. There were six or seven men standing around looking at it, and they said it would never work - that they would always have trouble with it.

Greensburg was in the natural gas belt. Had two gas wells in the school yard at the West Bldg. A lot of farms had gas wells. They would go down about 300 ft. and would hit trenton rock. It sold for about 15¢ per thousand feet.

I was born in Harris City in 1890. There were five houses on top of a hill. I was born in one of them. They burned down. My parents moved to Greensburg when I was ten days old. Harris City was really an important part of Decatur County then. It had a stone quarry that employed 250 men. There was a railroad that went there. The quarry had a big spring. It was four feet across, and water came down out of the ledge of rock. There was a solid wall of flint 30' x 60' and possibly a car load of flint chips at the bottom of the wall.

They didn't start using concrete until about 1900. 10' x 12' blocks came to Cinsinnati for the foundation for a smokestack for the Proctor and Gamble Plant. The smokestack is still there. Some of the stone in the old large building at the Proctor and Gamble Soap factory, and stone in the work house, came from the Harris City quarry.

When I moved to Cincinnati, I learned that a lot of stone side

walks, curbs, and gutters was from the Harris City quarry. Yes, it was pretty important in its day.

- - -

Orliff McCormach was a bugler in the first World War. Altho he is 90 years old, he still remembers all 65 calls, drills and signals of his division. He lost a son in the second World War in a ship explosion.

He was in Dayton, and was present when the Wright Bros. were presented with their medals. On that day there was a man there who had a balloon that cost \$600. People said he'd lose money on that, for now people will be using the flying machine at county fairs.

Orliff has been blind about 30 years. On a Saturday, he drove his car, on Sunday read the paper and on Monday woke up blind. He has in no way let this get him down. He learned Braille. He has a Braille typewriter, has four tape recorders. He tapes sermons and writes his letters on tape. He is a 32'd degree Mason, and is living in the Masonic Home in Springfield, Ohio, and loves it.

* * *

POEM written by Roy Kanouse, better known as "Gosh," and published in the official publication of the Indiana Medical Ass'n. in 1916

"Here's my check for bill tu
date,
Fer doctorin' me and my
runnin' mate;
Fer throat wash en quinine,
tablets en pills
And all other remedies tu
cure our ills."

* * *

O. G. SEES A BICYCLE
FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 1882

(Excerpt Oscar Miller Memoirs)

After two days of visiting relatives we proceeded on our homeward journey via horse and buggy. It was a most interesting outing for both my brother and me. We returned by the city of Anderson and arrived in Greensburg after an absence of ten days. On our way back from this famous horse and buggy trip, a young man overtook us and went gliding by us on a beautiful new high wheeled bicycle. This was the first real good bicycle that I had ever seen. This fellow seemed to roll along so comfortably and gracefully, and apparently with but little exertion. He soon disappeared as he was going faster than our horse. The sight of this man on a bicycle filled me with a great desire to have just such a wheel. I believe the Bible says in substance, "thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's horse, his cow, his ox or his ass." But I must confess that my bump of covetousness was working pretty hard when I saw that fine bicycle that I could wish for but could not possess. I thought that I wanted a bicycle more than anything in the world. The desire so pressed down on me that I had a sort of fever which might be called a bicycle fever. Of all the fevers that I have ever experienced I think the bicycle fever is the worst and most provoking malady of all fevers put together. It settles down and becomes such an unbearable disease that the doctors would probably call it bicycleitis. But what was I to do? I had no money and could not think it advisable to strike my father for the money. I knew quite well that my father had paid \$150.00 for the buggy in which we took this swell ride, that lasted 10 days. But then my brother was much older than I was. I feared that my father would think it the height of folly and extravagance

to pay out \$80.00 for such a worthless contrivance. I was too much of a diplomat to approach him on the subject without due reflection. My mind was fully made up that a bicycle was about the most noble piece of artistic work that the ingenuity and inventive mind of man had yet thought forth. The bicycles as then constructed were of the very high wheel variety. To see a young man mounted on a high wheel go down the street or highway, the revolving spokes glistening in the sunlight, was a real picture of wonderful sublimity and artistic beauty. I could not think of such a means of locomotion as being anything other than "a thing of beauty and a joy forever." But I thought the time was not yet ripe for me to persuade my father to make such an investment.

I then went into a long conversation with my mother by telling her all about the wonderful trip I had had with my brother to see our King relatives. I told her in detail about what a wonderful visit we had and how much we had enjoyed driving through the country in a nice buggy. She was much interested in all I told her. At the end of this conversation I incidentally told her about my great desire to own a bicycle. She seemed interested, as she always was in any thing that I had to talk about. She was a very responsive person and always looked with due consideration as to anything that would add to my pleasure provided it would be useful and would promote my health and enjoyment. She was a woman of unusual good sound judgement. She was always looking to the interest, happiness and well being of all of her children. After we had discussed the advisability of buying a bicycle, she advised me that it might be best to wait until the following year, and if I made good grades in my first year of high school (cont'd. Pg. 5)

BICYCLE (cont'd.) then she would use her best efforts to induce my father to indulge me in a new bicycle. So I took her advice and for the time being this decision tended,, to some extent, to cool down the furious covetousness which so disturbed my bicycle fever.

My first year in Greensburg High School was now coming to a close. The spring of 1883 was bringing a new chapter of my existence, unfolding new thoughts and experiences in the small city that I now called my permanent home. Indeed, the past year had been very pleasant, and my association with my instructor, Mr. Allison, had been very agreeable, and as I thought, valuable in advancing me along with my work in school.

As the last days of the spring term advanced, my mind became active as to what might be in store for me in the free outside world. My lingering thoughts that had taken possession of me in the fall of 1882 relating to the hope that I might sometime be the possessor of a bicycle now showed signs of being revived. I began to vehemently hope that my father and mother would look favorably on my desire to own a bicycle, and that they would become possessed with a very brilliant spark of indulgence on my behalf. I knew that I dare not press the matter too hard or too soon. The matter must be approached with considerable diplomacy.

I told them that my report cards would show that I had made good grades throughout the year. This was one of my arguments that I advanced with the hopes of stimulating my father's benevolence in the direction of my wishes. Of course, he was born and reared in the horse and buggy period, which was still going on. Self-propelled locomotion was to him a very new thing, and should be

tolerated only by some one who wanted to indulge in a sport of lazy idleness.

He said that he had hoped that he had not raised a boy that would ask him to purchase such a useless contrivance and pay such an extravagant price for a play thing. I told him it was much more than a plaything, and furthermore it was a thing that would improve my muscles and be a very healthful exercise. It would be much better than riding a horse. All that we said in way or argument contained no harsh or bitter words. We always tried to avoid that in discussing things of a domestic or business nature.

I told both my father and mother that the bicycle would only cost \$80.00, also that I was not asking for a horse and buggy. I incidentally remarked, as gently as diplomacy would seem to indicate, recalling that father had bought a buggy that cost \$250.00 for his oldest son, Lucien, who was about ten years my senior. A double set of fine martingaled harness went with this buggy, so it could be stylishly drawn by two fine horses. I called attention, also, that six years later another buggy and harness was bought for my brother Jesse, also that one horse was provided to draw this conveyance. In those days I think it was generally thought that a young man who belonged to the family of a prosperous farmer should have a fine horse and buggy in order to attract the feminine beauties of the near and remote countryside. These accouterments seemed to be the desideratum of every young gentleman who wanted to go out sparking and seek his lady love and make a deep and favorable impression as to his fitness of being a prospective husband.

I finally dropped the very friendly argument (cont'd. Pg 6)

BICYCLE (cont'd.) for the time being, in order to let my father have full time to decide what he should do about fitting me out with a self-propelled vehicle with only two wheels. In postponing any further talk on the subject and waiting for a time that I hoped would be more favorable, I tried to impress them with the fact that the possession of a bicycle was the only sine qua non to my real happiness in life.

In the meantime I sought my good friend, Dr. Wooden, who was riding a new bicycle, and talked at length with him as to which kind and make of wheels were the best, of course going into full details as to the intricate mechanism of all kinds of wheels, until I had wheels in my head, and until I almost had a very disquieting fever that came on in intermittent doses. This bicycle fever continued for several days, when, to my great joy, my mother told me that my father had about concluded to buy me a wheel. He had come to the conclusion that possibly after all a bicycle was not altogether a harmfully bad thing for a boy to own. I think the influence of my mother may have had quite a bit to do in helping him to reach that conclusion.

The Rubicon had been crossed, and our "ships had been burned behind us," and the young lad of the Miller family had taken wings and was able to fly where he wished. This may seem, at this day of rapid transportation, very silly to talk about the speed of a bicycle. But we must remember that I had been used to horses that scarcely ever travelled over 8 miles an hour on the public highway, while a man on a bicycle could go at the rate of 15 to 20 miles per hour. It was not uncommon for some bicycle enthusiasts to make what they were proud to call a "century run" by going 100 miles in a day. This was fast traveling, considering the imperfect condition of our

highways at that time. Most all of our roads were made of rough broken stone and gravel, and in some cases were of native soil fit for bicycle travel only during the summer season. However, there were enough improved turnpikes in the state to entice the bicycle fraternity to go touring and see and explore the land where before they had not been able to see. It gave them wings of flight which had, up to that time, been denied to them as a mode of enjoyable travel. At that time there was no bicycle agency in the town of Greensburg.

Through the help of Dr. Hershel Wooden, my wheel was ordered from the factory. About ten days later it arrived at the freight depot. It was a Star Bicycle. It was a beautiful creation of man's most daring and enthusiastic workmanship. To see a young man mount astraddle of a very high wheel and ride away, retaining his balance and perfect equipoise as he gracefully glided along, astonished many people, who looked in wonderment upon this unusual performance. This creation of wonderment on the part of the public contributed, in no small degree, to the pride of the boy on the beautiful and dazzling high wheeled bicycle. Well, why shouldn't it infuse a pardonable degree of pride in the young bicycle rider when he so readily observed that people were astonished at seeing him on such a novel conveyance? By some, this adventurous youth, perched on his high wheeled bike, was looked upon as a sort of gay and glorious knight of the days when knighthood was in full bloom.

Memoirs to be continued

Written by
MINERVA HAMILTON BARTHOLOMEW DONNELL
February 19, 1859

and in the fall I have spent many a day with him in the woods hunting squirrels or gathering walnuts and hickory nuts.

I was born Jan. 2nd, 1817 in Nocholas Co., Ky. I have very little recollection of anything that occurred during the seven years that I lived there. My Father died when I was 5 months old. I have a faint recollection of the two story log house in which we lived with a public road, a creek and high hill on the south side of it, of going to school and learning to read in the new Testament; on our journey here I gathered the first beechnuts I had ever seen and for the first time beheld the Ohio River. We settled on the farm now owned by Marshall Hamilton, we had a comfortable log house with the thick woods all around us. The first day we attended school our brother Thomas, who was as a father to us, passed before us with an ax in his hand cutting the underbrush and peeling the bark for a few inches off of either side of the trees that we might have something to guide us to and from school. My companions were Sister Jane and Narcissa Mitchell, the daughter of my eldest Sister, three months younger than myself. We lived a few yards apart and the happiest hours of my child and girlhood were spent in her society. She was highly gifted by nature and made a good improvement of her time and talents. We were soon comfortable in our new home. We had three rooms and a kitchen with an apple and peach orchard to the north and two wild cherry trees and a spring on the south side of the house. We all worked with our own hands to gather into heaps the brush and logs and burned them after dark to see how great a light it would make. We were healthy and happy. In the spring we tapped the maples and made an abundance of sugar and molasses. We carried the water in buckets or hauled it in a barrel and boiled in kettles by a huge fire of logs at nights. We assisted our brother Marshall to plant and weed the corn

My opportunities for an education were very limited. My first schooling was under incompetent teachers in a vacant log hut without ceiling of any sort overhead, rough puncheon floor, logs split in two with the flat side up, two holes bored in each end with stick drove in to hold them up so high our feet never touched the floor were the seats on which we sat - there was not a plank, nail or pane of glass in the building. The wide fireplace was built of sticks of wood; the hearth, backwalls and jams of mud; but before I was through my education we had a brick school house, but without any of the conveniences of our modern buildings.

I formed few acquaintances in childhood and youth. My sister Jane, two years older, was playful, fond of society and so unlike me that Narcissa became more than a sister to me until her death, which occurred in the 19th year of her age. This was a sad event in my life. We had played, studied and gone out in to society together. She died of consumption. She requested me to go away the night she died, my health was very feeble and she thought it would injure me to see her suffering. She said I would soon follow her - as I rode to her funeral I almost wished myself in her place. Marshall had married and mother had broken up house keeping. I was living at Thomas Donnell's, my sister Sallie's husband, and although they treated me kindly, I never felt that I had a home until I married. She died on Saturday night. She was a member of the Presbyterian Church.

She exclaimed when dying what a glorious Sabbath tomorrow will be. She was buried (cont'd on p 8)

DONNELL (Cont'd.) in Kingston, near my sister Ellen who died a few years before. I now became devotedly attached to Jane, and we have continued so to the present time. We were separated from each other and from our dear Mother and we never knew until then how dear we were to each other and from our dear Mother and we never knew until then how dear we were to each other. I returned to the old homestead a few days after we all left, before Marshall moved in. Some of our furniture was there, the old family cat, a large black one which had been there ten years came out to meet me, he rubbed his head against me and purred aloud. I lifted up my voice and wept like a child. I opened the door and entered the silent deserted home, the only place I could call home. The echo of my footsteps almost terrified me. I looked around - there was Mother's wicker chair in the corner where she always sat, empty. The weather was a little cool and no fire burned on the hearth. There stood the bed where I had always slept with my mother. I knew we could never all live there again. I cried until I was exhausted. As many times as I have wept thinking over the last night we all spent at home together, my tears come fresh just as they did when we knelt down to pray at night together for the last time. Mother could only speak in broken sentences and we were sobbing on either side of her. Dear children you can never value too highly the parental home. I speak from experience.

But I must turn from these mournful subjects to something more cheerful. My childhood, youth and middle age, although they have many sorrows to record, have gleams of sunshine which the memory can recall and in some measure live over again.

I was married in the year 1836 the 15th of Sept. - in the 20th year of my age - to Peter Jones Bartholomew, who was born in New

York December 3rd, 1813 but raised and educated in Ohio, Clermont County. He was 23 years old, of very delicate constitution - a good common school education, a printer to trade, with a well informed mind. He was rather handsome for so small a man. He weighed 135 lbs, and I 95. We lived happily together. He was a most amiable person in his disposition, and won friends wherever he went. We were immature in fridgement and I often look back at our housekeeping and management as very like children's play. Indeed the history of my first marriage seems like a dream or something which occurred in another state of existence, were it not for the child so like his father I could hardly realize it, but again it comes back very life like. He was not a professor of religion at the time of our marriage but was strictly moral. Aug. 27th, 1839 Thomas was born at Crawfordsville where we were publishing the "Indiana Record." We had been married three years and were a little less like children. We were very proud and fond of our boy. He was very sick for a few weeks and our hearts were rent with sorrow at the thoughts of losing our new-found treasure, but God who suffers not a sparrow to fall to the ground without his notice, pitied our grief and left him with us. In May (28th) 1841 when Thomas was 1 year and 8 months old his father was suddenly attacked with bleeding at the lungs.

He rose in the morning from bed after retiring at night in good health and sleeping soundly all night, gave a slight cough; the blood flew in little particles from the mouth much as it would from the nose in sneezing. He lay back on the bed in a reclining posture, propped with pillows. He continued to expectorate as fast as he could throw it up with a strangling sensation, not discharging half. (cont'd. pg. 9)

DONNELL (cont'd.) a pint, perhaps not more than a gill of light thin looking blood. Drs. Bartholomew, Carter and Moody were called in. They administered sugar of lead. He lay 24 hours in the posture in which he bled, afraid to be lain back or moved lest it would return. He said the feeling was very like death. He was not able to sit up for several weeks. I was not aware of his danger. He suffered with pain in his left side and slight cough but was able through the summer to ride out sometimes and entertained hopes of getting well. During the fall he was confined to the house and bed and suffered a great deal apparently with his stomach and bowels. He died Nov. the 22nd 1841 in the 28th year of his age. He made a profession of religion a short time before his death, united with the Methodist Church and professed a willingness to die and a hope of acceptance into the joys of heaven. His last request was for his child. As I write my mind goes back to these scenes with a vividness it has not felt for a great while. How blest to have been 20 years in glory while I have been struggling against temptations, often overcome, making little if any advance. Oh, I would not for the world call him back to suffer it all over again.

We were living in Greensburg, publishing the "Chronicle of the Times" at the time of his death. His remains by his own request were brought to the Kingston graveyard to be interred. A sermon was preached in the Presbyterian Church by the Rev. W. Sullivan, a Methodist minister, from Ecclesiastis, 7th Ch. and 14th verse. "In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider." He lies by the side of Mother whom he always loved as his own mother. A small tombstone marks his resting place. I was left a widow before I was 26 years old. We agreed mutually, at my

suggestion, to deed 80 acres of land near Fort Wayne to Thomas. When the estate was all settled up I had nothing left but my household furniture. I took a room in my brother Cyrus' house - taught school in the summer and took in sewing in the winter and although I taught at from 8 to 12 dollars a month and boarded myself I lived independent and supported myself and child comfortably and respectably. The first two summers I had to leave Thomas with his aunt Fidelia Michell from Monday till Friday. Their kindness to him I shall never forget. He would watch until he saw me coming and run to meet me. Sometimes we both cried for joy. The third summer I took him to school with me and he learned to read. He was now five years old.

Ed. Minerva Donnell was a grandmother of Margaret Becker and Betty Donnell Scott.

* * *

From "Greensburg Standard" 6-1-06 (65 years ago.)

"The late Mrs. Sarah B. Snook, whose death occurred last week, was the first child born in Decatur County. The county was organized in May 1822 out of territory taken from Delaware Co., and Mrs. Snook, daughter of John Robbins, was born in July following. Three other children had been recently born in present limits of the county, just before organization - a daughter to Mr. Jarret, then living near Clarksburg, and a son each to George and Samuel Marlow. One of the "boys" Hamp Marlow still lives in Sandusky neighborhood."

SOCIETY'S OFFICERS

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HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF
DECATUR COUNTY, IND.
DECATUR COUNTY, IND
GREENSBURG, INDIANA
47240

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